

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI
SUBJ: LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE: ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION

1. AT HIS REQUEST, I CALLED ON ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER VALDES THIS AFTERNOON; DCM BOYATT ACCOMPANYING. AS EXPECTED, VALDES HANDED OVER THE FORMAL REPLIES TO OUR LETTERS ROGATORY FROM THE CHILEAN COURT (ATTORNEY PROPPER WILL HANDCARRY THESE BACK TO THE U.S. WITH HIM).

2. I TOLD VALDES THAT I WAS HAPPY TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK PRIVATELY WITH HIM ABOUT THE LETELIER CASE WHICH WAS RAPIDLY REACHING A CRITICAL STAGE. I WANTED BOTH HIM AND THE GOC TO BE AWARE OF MY CONCERN AND THE OPPORTUNITIES AND DANGERS INHERENT IN THE MATTER.

3. IN INFORMED VALDES THAT ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY PROPPER AND FBI OFFICIALS HAVE MADE KNOWN TO CHILEAN SECURITY OFFICIALS THE EXISTENCE OF A U.S. ARREST WARRANT FOR TOWNLEY AND OF OUR DESIRE THAT HE BE EXPELLED SO THAT THE ARREST WARRANT MIGHT BE SERVED.
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THE GOC HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE WARRANT AND OUR VIEW THAT TOWNLEY SHOULD BE EXPELLED IMMEDIATELY ON FRIDAY; SO FAR NOTHING HAS HAPPENED.

4. POTENTIALLY AT LEAST, THE GOC HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE A VERY POSITIVE PROJECTION OF CHILE'S COOPERATION IN THE LETELIER MATTER AND GENERAL POLITI-

CAL PROGRESS (THE CONJUNCTION OF THE EXPULSION OF TOWNLEY WITH THE POSITIVE MEASURES PRESIDENT PINOCHET IS EXPECTED TO ANNOUNCE TOMORROW, APRIL 5TH, AND THE MEZVINSKY VISIT WOULD PROVIDE SUCH A PROJECTION. HOWEVER, IF ONE ELEMENT OF THE THREE IS NEGATIVE, I.E., THE GOC DOES NOT EXPEL TOWNLEY, THEN THAT "BAD NEWS" WILL ERASE WHATEVER GOOD NEWS THERE MIGHT BE.

5. IF CHILE EXPELS TOWNLEY NOW, IT WILL BE AN ACTION TAKEN WITHOUT PRESSURE AND WILL BE REGARDED AS PROOF OF GOC'S COOPERATION. IF THE MATTER DRAGS ON FOR TWO WEEKS, OR MORE THEN WHAT IS NOW A JUDICIAL MATTER WILL INEVITABLE BECOME A POLITICAL MATTER BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WHICH WILL VERY OBVIOUSLY COMPLICATE BILATERAL RELATIONS FURTHER WITH RESULTS THAT WOULD BE UNPREDICTABLE.

6. ALREADY THE PUBLIC SITUATION IS WORSENING. TOWNLEY'S LAWYER HAS ATTACKED ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY PROPPER PUBLICLY AND BEGUN A PRESS CAMPAIGN FOR TOWNLEY TO BE MADE A CHILEAN CITIZEN. THIS WILL VERY QUICKLY BE PICKED UP IN THE U.S. PRESS AND WILL BE TREATED AS EVIDENCE THAT THE GOC IS STALLING AND COVERING UP REGARDING TOWNLEY AND IN THE LETELIER CASE.

7. PROPPER IS RETURNING TO THE U.S. IN THE NEXT DAY OF TWO AND IF HE IS FORCED TO REPORT THAT CNI AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GOC ARE TAKING THE POSITION THAT THEY CANNOT DELIVER TOWNLEY FOR TWO WEEKS OR MORE, THEN VALDES SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE BILATERAL SITUATION WOULD LIKELY DETERIORATE RAPIDLY. IN THE INTERESTS OF U.S./CHILE RELATIONS IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT TOWNLEY BE EXPELLED IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO. I TOLD VALDES THAT I KNEW THERE WERE THOSE AROUND PRESIDENT PINOCHET WHO WERE STATING THAT THE U.S. HAS ALREADY DECIDED TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH CHILE AND IS USING THE LETELIER CASE AS A PRETEXT. I CATEGORICALLY DENIED THIS. THE INTEREST OF THE USG IS IN SEEING THAT THOSE WHO MURDERED LETELIER AND A U.S. CITIZEN IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND THOSE WHO ARRANGED FOR THE MURDER, ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. OUR INTERESTS ARE JURIDICAL AND NOT POLITICAL, BUT IF THERE IS NO PROGRESS THE SITUATION WILL BECOME POLITICAL.

8. I EMPHASIZED TO VALDES THAT THE CONDUCT OF THE POLICE AND SECURITY SERVICES HAD CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO EXISTING PROBLEMS. FIRST, WHEN THE U.S. TRIED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER ON A POLICE-TO-POLICE BASIS GENERAL BAEZA OF INVESTIGACIONES SIMPLY DID NOTHING.

SECOND, AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE THE CNI SAID IT DID NOT KNOW WHERE TOWNLEY WAS AT A MOMENT WHEN EVERYONE IN SANTIAGO, INCLUDING THE PRESS, HAD THIS INFORMATION. THIRD, AT THE END OF LAST WEEK WHEN THE U.S. WISHED TO MOVE TO QUESTION TOWNLEY, WE SUDDENLY DISCOVERED THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN SERVED WITH A SUMMONS. FOURTH, OBVIOUSLY ON THE BASIS OF BAD INFORMATION, FOREIGN MINISTER CARVAJAL HAD TWICE UNDERLINED TO ME THAT THE CHARGES WERE ABSURD BECAUSE FERNANDEZ HAD NEVER BEEN TO THE U.S. THESE ASSERTIONS CAME AT A TIME WHEN CNI HAD KNOWN FOR WEEKS THAT FERNANDEZ HAD BEEN IN THE U.S., AS DID WE. NOW FERNANDEZ HAD CONFESSED BEFORE A JUDGE THAT HE WAS IN FACT IN THE U.S. I SAID THAT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES HE WOULD UNDERSTAND
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MY LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE PROFESSIONALISM AND DISPATCH WITH WHICH MATTERS MIGHT BE MANAGED.

9. FINALLY, I TOLD VALDES THAT IN REQUESTING TOWNLEY'S EXPEDITIOUS EXPULSION I DID NOT WISH TO PUT HIM PERSONALLY IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION. I SAID THAT IF HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THE PRESIDENT OR FOR BOTH OF US TO GO TO THE PRESIDENT I WOULD BE HAPPY TO DO SO.

10. THROUGHOUT MY MONOLOGUE VALDES CONFINED HIMSELF TO SYMPATHETIC MURMURS AND NODS. AFTERWORD, HE SAID THAT GENERAL MENA HAD RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED A MEETING AT 5:00 AND THAT WE WOULD DEAL WITH THE MATTER FURTHER AT THAT TIME. I WILL REPORT THE RESULTS OF THE NEXT EPISODE.
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